

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-5 and 7-12 are pending in the application.

Claim 6 is canceled.

Because the claims have not been amended, no new matter has been added.

Applicants thank Examiner Al-Arini for the helpful and courteous interview of October 17, 2006, wherein the obviousness rejection was discussed, and it was agreed that an inventor's declaration showing that the inventive process produces an unexpected and superior result would incline the Examiner to favorably reconsider the claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the obviousness rejection of Claims 1-5 and 7-12, as being unpatentable over Neutzner in combination with Dunson or Koch, because the instant invention produces a superior and unexpected result.

Applicants have submitted, along with the paper, an inventor's declaration. In the declaration, at page 2, paragraph A), the inventor describes that a column cleaned with the process of the invention (i.e., the pressure in the gas immediately above an uppermost tray of the tray column divided by the number of trays in the column is 2 mbar per tray, which falls within the 0.5 to 5 mbar per tray limitation of present Claim 1) resulted in a polymer remainder of less than 5 kg total.

Conversely, the inventor's declaration, at paragraph B), describes that a process not of the invention - Neutzner's process (i.e., the pressure in the gas immediately above an uppermost tray of the tray column divided by the number of trays in the column is 10 mbar per tray, which falls outside of the 0.5 to 5 mbar per tray limitation of present Claim 1) resulted in a polymer remainder of more 50 kg per tray.

The inventor's declaration also describes, at page 2, that the results could not have been foreseen by the skilled artisan (i.e., the results were unexpected).

Thus, the process of the instant invention uses a lower pressure per tray to achieve an unexpected and superior cleaning result.

As previously described in the response filed on June 21, 2006, Neutzner employs pressures per tray that are higher than those described in present Claim 1 (ranging from, for example, 300 mbar per tray (please see Example 1, pages 19-20 of Neutzner) to 10 mbar per tray (please see the inventor's declaration, paragraph B, at page 2). Thus, Neutzner does not describe or suggest the limitation of Claim 1. Additionally, there would be no expectation of success using the pressure limitation of present Claim 1. Koch and Dunson do not remedy these deficiencies of Neutzner.

Accordingly, because the process of the invention produces superior tray cleaning at a lower pressure, because this result was unexpected, because the cited references do not describe or suggest the pressure per tray limitation of Claim 1, and because there would be no expectation of success in employing the lower pressure limitation found in Claim 1, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants submit the application in now in condition for allowance. Early notification to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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